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ABSTRACT

This document presents literature review findings that provide background information on the director credentialing effort. Findings show that the director's role is essential to program quality and that director experience correlates with quality for children and their families. Research suggests training needs and the competencies or attributes of successful directors. Some articles indicate that consistency of training needs to be identified, and others have identified director problems and concerns. The case for training was found to depend on two arguments: its value in helping directors do their jobs effectively, and its importance to helping directors achieve quality. Findings show that almost no course work as been offered for directors in local colleges and other training institutions. (JPB)

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The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education
Wheelock College

200 The Riverway, Boston, MA 02215

PH: 617-734-5200, Ext. 211 . FAX: 617-738-0643

E-MAIL: Centers@wheelock.edu

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Research Findings Relevant to Director Credentialing

Literature provides the following background to the director credential effort.

1. **The director's role is essential to program quality.** See Decker & Decker, 1984; Greenman & Fuqua, 1984; Jorde Bloom, 1992; Peters & Kostelnik, 1981; Powell & Stremmel, 1989.

2. **Director experience correlates with quality for children and their families.** Training may be very important to quality for children. For teaching staff, experience is found in all studies to be not equivalent to formal training (Jorde Bloom, 1990; Powell & Stremmel, 1989; Roupp, R., Travers, J., Glantz, F., & Coelen, C., 1979). However, the study of Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes (1995) found significant effects of director experience, unlike the finding for teachers.

Other studies have also found that director experience has effects on quality (Kontos & Fiene, 1987; Phillips & Howes, 1987). A plausible explanation may be that there is little or no training available to directors, and therefore studies do not reveal training as having effects, although it is clear that the director is a key to quality.

3. **Training needs.** Competent teachers are likely to be promoted to director status (Hegland, 1984; Jorde Bloom, 1990; Osborne & Strauss, 1988; Norton & Abramowitz, 1981). However, their experience with this role change indicates a need for other, additional competencies to equip them for the role of director.

4. **Competencies or attributes of successful directors.** Lists of director competence began to appear in the literature in the seventies. Nancy Travis and Joe Perrault at Save the Children developed such a list in connection with training for directors in the southeast region. These lists were circulated to other parts of the country during pre-conference sessions at NAEYC, where Save the Children joined with leaders from the University of Michigan, Purdue University, and Wheelock College, to offer shared training sessions for directors. This list was further amended, and circulated every year at Wheelock for improvement (Morgan, 1995).

There have been a number of doctoral theses and other studies. Some studies of training needs include: Austin & Morrow, 1985; Bordelon, Stone, & Tate 1981; Johnston, 1983; Larkin, 1992; Manning, 1996; Norton & Abramowitz 1981; Poster, 1986; Texas Department of Human Resources, 1977.

NAEYC's accreditation standards (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991) list 13 criteria involving the director (annual program assessment; written policies and procedures; written personnel policies and hiring practices; benefits administration; record keeping for children, staff, and board; written board policies where applicable; fiscal record keeping; insurance coverage; familiarity with community resources; frequent staff communication for program planning; individual child consultation; working

conditions and evaluation; the provision of planning time and breaks for staff; confidentiality of information about children and families; and designation of person of authority when director is absent. Even this limited list makes clear, however, that the director is directly involved in the quality of the program for children.

5. Consistency of training needs to be identified. The various competency lists, possibly because of widespread sharing, reveal a great deal of consistency (Axelrod, Schwartz, Weinstein, & Buch, 1984; BAEYC, 1995; Jorde Bloom, 1990, 1992; Morgan, 1995). Most competencies can be placed under four large categories (Manning, 1996): organizational theory and leadership; child development and early childhood programming; financial and legal issues; and board, parent and community relations. These categories are drawn so broadly that a wide range of activities fall under them; in reality, the director's role is extremely diverse. All the lists would require substantial child development knowledge, although some lists treat this knowledge as a pre-existing competency to which additional competencies must be added, while others list all competencies comprehensively.

A few studies have identified director problems and concerns; these might by extension be considered to call for competencies (Austin & Morrow, 1986; Norton & Abramowitz, 1981). An example is a concern for staff evaluation (Catron & Kendall 1984). Another is limited in-depth staff development related to principles of quality care in a diverse society. Center staff are unsure about how to provide appropriate language development instruction to children who speak languages other than English. (Chang, Muckelroy, & Pulido-Tobiasen, 1996). These concerns quite readily fall into the competency lists under the four categories identified above by Manning (1996).

6. Rationale for meeting training needs. Few states require any competency development for directors, so that there is not a "need" in the sense that directors must receive this training. Currently the case for training rests on two bases: 1) its value in helping directors do their job more effectively and 2) its importance to helping directors achieve quality. Directors are involved in both structural and process features of quality for child care, as described by Larner and Phillips (1994), and therefore their role in quality is not limited to pedestrian aspects of the work. Studies indicate a major leadership role for directors which involves many aspects of the role, as seen in competency lists (Cromwell, 1994; Culkin, 1994; Schiller & Dyke, 1990.)

7. Availability of training for directors. Almost no course work has been offered for directors in local colleges and other training institutions (Morgan, Azer, Costley, Genser, Goodman, Lombardi, & McGimsey, 1993).

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